REMARKS

Claim 1 has been amended based on the disclosure at, e.g., page 7, last five lines, and page 10, lines 3-12, in the present application, and claim 8 has been canceled accordingly.

Entry of the above amendment is respectfully requested.

Information Disclosure Statement

Applicants note that an Information Disclosure Statement was filed in the present application on May 6, 2008. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner consider the disclosed information and return an initialed copy of the PTO/SB/08 form with the next communication from the PTO.

Obviousness Rejections

On page 3 of the Office Action, in paragraph 2, claims 1 and 4-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 08-141386 (JP '386) in view of JP 11-128612 (JP '612). Further, on page 5 of the Office Action, in paragraph 8, claims 1 and 4-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP '386 in view of JP '612 and further in view of US Patent 3,594,414 (US '414).

In response, Applicants submit initially that one would have modified JP '386 in view of JP '612 as the Examiner has proposed.

In this regard, Applicants wish to point out that JP '386 specifically places its slurry removing pipe projecting up from the bottom to remove slurry without peeled-off matters, while JP '612 provides a draining device by which only liquid contents in the slurry in a tank can be drawn off. Thus, one would not be motivated to modify JP '386 to move its slurry removing pipe

to the JP '612 position where the pipe could drain only liquid contents, because then the pipe would not be removing slurry.

Further, Applicants submit that even if one would have made the modification proposed by the Examiner, one would not have arrived at the present invention.

That is, if one did modify JP '386 to move its slurry removing pipe to the JP '612 position where the pipe could drain only liquid contents, then one would not have arrived at the present invention, because the present invention requires a slurry extraction tube protruding from the side wall (in contrast, the pipe in the combination of JP '386 and JP '612 could not be called a slurry extraction pipe, since it would only be extracting liquid).

Also, Applicants note that claim 1 has been amended to incorporate features for the slurry contents and a difference in pressure, and Applicants submit that JP '386 and JP '612 do not teach or suggest such features. In this regard, Applicants submit that it is known by one of ordinary skill in the art that slurry which comprises terephthalic acid and water can easily produce a solid bridge, as is taught in paragraph [0006] of JP '386. The requirement in present claim l that "a normal line direction of a surface of the open end of the slurry extraction tube is in a direction of an angle with respect to a downstream direction of a flow of slurry 0° or more and less than 90°" and "the slurry is extracted from the agitation vessel to another agitation vessel under a lower pressure through a difference in pressure of 0.1 MPa or more" provides the effect of the present invention that the slurry does not produce a solid bridge while extracting the slurry. In Comparative Example 1 of the present application, the fact that extraction of the slurry became impossible shows that a solid bridge was produced in the slurry.

Moreover, the cited art does not teach or suggest the requirement in present claim 1 that "a normal line direction of a surface of the open end of the slurry extraction tube is in a direction of an angle with respect to a downstream direction of a flow of slurry of 0° or more and less than 90°". In this regard, it is noted that the Examiner indicates that JP '612 teaches a device with a tube at a side wall of a tank enabling slurry in tank to flow out by head differential. However, a normal line direction of a surface of the open end of the JP '612 tube is in a direction of an angle with respect to a downstream direction of flow of 90°, based on the position of the impeller attached to element 25 relative to the opening of pipe 22.

In this regard, Applicants submit herewith a sketch in which Figure 2 of JP '612 has been filled in with two arrows like those used in Fig. 2(b) of the present application. In the sketch, the symbol of a dot in a circle shows the direction that is "a downstream direction of a flow of the slurry". The symbol corresponds to the arrow 10 in Fig. 2(b) of the present application. The arrow 9a in the sketch pointing to the bottom of the vessel shows "a normal line direction of a surface of the open end of the slurry extraction tube" in the Figure 2 of JP '612. The angle between the direction of the symbol of a dot in a circle and the direction of the arrow 9a in the sketch is 90°, thereby showing that the present invention is distinguished from the invention of JP '612 in this regard.

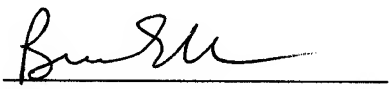
In view of the above, Applicants submit that the cited art does not teach, suggest, or otherwise render obvious the present invention, and thus withdrawal of the obviousness rejections is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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